

ALESIUS AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR A. F. SCOTT PEARSON,
D.Th., D.Litt., F.R.Hist.S.

I

ALEXANDER ALAN, better known as Alesius, was born in Edinburgh on 23rd October, 1500. He went to St. Andrews University, where he must have been one of the first students of St. Leonard's College, with Major as one of his teachers, for it was founded in 1512 and Alesius graduated B.A. from it—along with John Wynram, John Douglas and others—in 1515.¹ He became an Augustinian Canon in St. Andrews, and was a zealous adherent of medieval scholasticism until he sought to convert his fellow St. Andrean, Patrick Hamilton, from the Lutheran errors for which the latter was soon to be burnt. He frankly acknowledges that it was the man whom he tried to reclaim who opened his eyes and was the means of his own conversion : *Cum eo collocutus sum, sperans me affecturum ut errorem cognosceret. Eram tum doctrinae Sententiariorum addictus. Verum praeter expectationem meam evenit, ut ex ipsius colloquio meum errorem cognoscerem.*² Shortly after this momentous intercourse Hamilton died at the stake in St. Andrews and Alesius was a spectator of the grim scene. According to Knox³ John Lyndsay reminded Archbishop James Beaton, when he was planning more persecution, that “the reek of Maister Patrick Hammiltoun hes infected as many as it blew upoun.” There was doubtless truth in the saying. But here was an eye-witness who was already infected, a convert whom the martyrdom confirmed. That day a torch of flame and light was handed on by the martyr to Alesius, which the latter kept burning brightly for the next thirty-seven years, and for most of that time in exile.⁴ It is worthy of note that the mission of Alesius was thus personally initiated by the proto-martyr of the Scottish Reformation and that it illustrates the reality of the spiritual apostolic succession, with its continuity amid diversity, characteristic of the history and development of the true Church of God. The Lollard and Lutheran

¹ *Early Records of St. Andrews Univ.*, ed. J. M. Anderson, 104, 211; *Allane nationis laudoniae*, in matric. roll; Alan, in grad. roll, when he is placed among *pauperes*.

² v. Lorimer, *Pat. Ham.*, 134n.

³ *Works*, I, 42.

⁴ For an illustration of the deep and abiding impression made by Hamilton upon Alesius v. the latter's “*Cohortatio*” (1544), sig. C3v, C4.

elements in the heritage bequeathed by Hamilton to Alesius were to be faithfully preserved by the latter and adapted by him to the changing circumstances of his varied career.

In 1529 Alesius was appointed by Archbishop Beaton to preach at the provincial synod of the clergy, probably in order that he, suspected of heretical tendencies, might disclose the same. In his sermon he carefully avoided all controversial doctrine, but with the zeal of a reformer he exhorted the clergy to perform their duties with conscientious fidelity. His earnest moral idealism stung to the quick the sensual prior, Patrick Hepburn, who imagined that Alesius's critical shafts were directed against himself, and soon, in vengeance, began a campaign of persecution against the canon. Hepburn had him imprisoned in a filthy St. Andrews dungeon. Released for a while at the king's command, he was again put in prison for about a year. Ultimately, with the help of his fellow canons, he escaped and set sail from Dundee for the Continent about 1531. He says that the chief reason for his harsh treatment was the fact that the authorities were enraged because he and others mourned the death of Hamilton and refused to condemn the martyr.¹ The ship on which he sailed was driven by a storm out of its course and landed at Malmö. After a short stay there it sailed to France. Alesius then proceeded through Belgium to Cologne, where he met Archbishop Hermann von Wied, and thence to Wittenberg, where he was enrolled in the philosophical faculty of the University on 29th October, 1532.² On 12th December, 1533, he, being in need of money, wrote to Spalatin requesting him to secure the payment of the moiety of the prebend of Altenburgh conferred upon him by the Elector of Saxony, at the request of Luther and Melanchthon.³ In 1533 he published a small but significant book of fourteen leaves: *Alexandri Alesii Epistola contra decretum quoddam Episcoporum in Scotia, quod prohibet legere Novi Testamenti libros lingua vernacula*.⁴ In it he appealed to James V to annul the recent edict. In view of the deficiencies of preaching in Scotland it was imperative that the laity should be allowed to study the Scriptures at home. The importance of the home training of the young is emphasised, especially seeing that their efficient catechising

¹ v. Anderson, *Annals*, II, 436.

² Baxter, *Alesius and other Refugees in Germany*, Records Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc., V, ii, 93; Ath. Cant., I, 238, says he was incorporated in Wittenberg Univ. on 7th Oct., 1533; Anderson, *Annals*, II, 480, errs in stating that there is no evidence that Alesius was in Wittenberg before 1539.

³ *Corp. Ref.*, II, col. 690-1; Mitchell, *Sc. Ref.*, 309.

⁴ It is addressed to James V. The place of publication (Wittenberg ?) or printer's name is not given, but the date, MDXXXIII, is at the end. Other eds., 1542 (Strassburg) and 1543, are listed in Ath. Cant., I, 239. Copies are in B.M., Lambeth, Signet Lib., Edin.

in Church is a thing of the past. The writer says that, true to his Greek name, *Alesios*, he has wandered far, but has not found any such prohibition elsewhere.

In a short time John Cochlaeus, the redoubtable anti-Lutheran, who in 1525 had exposed the presence of Tyndale and Roye in Cologne¹ and compelled them to transfer the printing of the English N.T. to Worms, published a reply of 173 pages to Alesius's *Epistola* entitled, *An Expediat Laicis Legere Novi Testamenti Libros Lingua Vernacula?*² Cochlaeus had received a copy of the Scot's work from Wittenberg (*exemplar istud quod habeo a Vuittenberga venisse, velut e communi profugorum & apostatarum Asylo*),³ where he thought the *Epistola* had been written and published. He tells of his detective work in Cologne eight years before,⁴ still insisting that Tyndale and Roye intended to translate Luther's N.T. into English, and pointing out how they had an eye to the facilities presented by a trading centre on the Rhine for the transportation of the obnoxious work into England. Magnifying the merit of his service to Henry VIII, he desires to perform a similar service to James V by exposing the real aim of Alesius, which in his opinion is the establishment of Lutheranism in Scotland. He suspects that Alesius is now at Wittenberg translating Luther's Testament and other books into the Scottish vernacular,⁵ and that he is in alliance with rich merchants who are willing to act as middlemen,⁶ and points out how easily exportation to Scotland could be effected via the Elbe and Hamburg (*id quod ei per Albim fluvium, cui Vuittenberga, sicut & Dresda, adiacet, non erit difficile, Albis enim in Oceanum Germanie emittit ubi Hamburgum, insigne Emporium, nunc Lutherismo confusum, c regione Scotiam prospicit*).⁷ He warns James that Alesius was not the only Scot who favoured Lutheranism, but that he had already infected many in Scotland before he left (*quos hic Ecclesiam Christi apud vos dicit & quos literis & libellis ad res novas Vuittenberga perpetuo sollicitabit, nisi in patriam retrahatur*),⁸ and he advises the king to keep a close watch on the Scottish harbours through which goods made in Germany are brought, as long as Alesius is in Saxony (*Expediet igitur, ut in portibus omnes merces, quae ex Germania advehuntur, diligenter discutiantur & explorentur, quandiu machinatur iste apud saxones ita sederit in occultis*).⁹

¹ Mozley, *Tyndale*, 57ff.

² It is addressed to James V and is dated *Ex Dresda Misniae ad Albim vi Idus Junij, MDXXXIII.*

³ *An Exped.*, sig. A4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. L5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. L5v.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. L5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. L5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. L5v.

Cochlaeus is convinced that Alesius desires to translate and import into Scotland Luther's Testament,¹ but even if it is another—Tyndale's—which he desires to see in use among the Scottish laity, then Cochlæus holds that the latter has more than two thousand errors in it and he is sure that all vernacular translations are dangerous.² He shows how Bible study among Lutheran laymen has led to numerous evils, especially to contention, heresy and disrespect for authority. Against Alesius's advocacy of Biblical instruction for youth he contends that it has bred contempt for the Church and even for parents among German boys and girls ; they behave like undisciplined beasts of the field.³ He contrasts the religious training of the young in the Roman Catholic Church ; from early infancy they are taught the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments, and learn to pray even before they can speak properly ; they are taken to Church in order that they may imbibe true piety by sight and hearing. He recapitulates the arguments of the *Epistola* and meets them one by one. His main aim is to show King James how among Lutherans in Germany the apostasy from the Church and the perversion of the people were due to the unrestricted circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, and in particular to the widespread applications of the erroneous principle that what is not expressed in the Scriptures is the work of the Devil : *Quod in scripturis non habetur, hoc Satanae additamentum esse.*⁴ Cochlæus is sure that it is an influx of Lutheranism against which James has to guard, although Alesius pretends that he does not belong to the Lutheran faction and in his *Epistola* never even mentions Luther's name (*Sic callide dissimulat se Lutheranae factionis esse, ut per totam Epistolam ne semel quidem Lutheri mentionem fecerit*)⁵ He went so far in his next book as to attribute the *Epistola* to Melanchthon, whose fraud he claimed to be able to detect by the style, phraseology and mode of argument.⁶

The reply of Alesius to Cochlæus, a book of thirty-one leaves, was issued without date, place or name of printer under the title : *Alexandri Alesii Scotti Responsio ad Cochlei Calumnias.*⁷ Some date it 1533 ;⁸ others place it in 1534.⁹ Probably it was issued at Wittenberg in 1534. Cochlæus in his answer to it¹⁰ says that the *Epistola* was published in the previous year, but that the *Responsio* appeared lately (*nuper*). Like

¹ *An Exped.*, sig. B8v.

² *Ibid.*, sig. C7.

³ *Ibid.*, sig. I3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. D4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C6.

⁶ Cochlæus, *Apologia*, sig. A1v.

⁷ Copies in Ch. of Scot. Lib., Edin., and Edin. Univ. Lib.

⁸ A. F. Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 302 ; Baxter, *op. cit.*, 99.

⁹ Anderson, *Annals*, II, 444 ; Ath. Cant., I, 239.

¹⁰ *Apologia*, Aug., 1534.

others of Alesius's writings the *Responsio* contains many autobiographical passages of great interest and historical worth, e.g., regarding his flight from St. Andrews and his visit to Cologne. The author rebuts the charge that he is a Lutheran; so far he has not come to know Luther. He denies that he is preparing a translation of Luther's Testament; he does not know German. The version in which he is interested and against which the Episcopal decree was directed is one that has been in use in Scotland for some time, obviously Tyndale's. He says that no bishop or monk in Scotland has ever attacked its fidelity as a translation, and that he has heard the best preachers there praise it for the light they have received from it. He laments the existing prohibition of the importation of the New Testament into Scotland, the campaign against bookshops there, and the burning of books seized in them. He attacks the unscriptural preaching of the monks and condemns their hostility, inspired by fear of exposure and by love of material gain, to the circulation of the vernacular New Testament. He pleads again, chiefly in the interests of the young, for its use in the home, and implores James V to follow the example of his father, who encouraged domestic Bible study among the Ayrshire Lollards.

In August, 1534, Cochlaeus renewed his attack on the Scottish exile in his "*Pro Scotiae Regno Apologia Iohannis Cochlei Adversus Personatum Alexandrum Alesium Scotum.*"¹ In his abusive pages he attributes the real authorship of Alesius's *Responsio* as well as the *Epistola* to Melanchthon.² He again charges Alesius with Lutheranism, and affirms that the heresies the Scot teaches are those of the Wycliffites, Hussites and others.³ Several times during the year he has received word from Wittenberg that Alesius is residing there (*Quoties enim hoc anno ex Vittenberga nuncium accepi, toties intellexi eum illic degere*),⁴ and is sure that the Scot is now in personal touch with Luther himself (*ab ipso Luthero in propria persona plene addiscat*).⁵ He has heard that three or four months ago one of James V's agents in England (*unum e tuis, virum minime vulgarem*)⁶ condemned the *Epistola* as mostly a pack of lies. Probably he refers to one of the ambassadors, Bishop William Stewart of Aberdeen, Lord High Treasurer, and Abbot Robert Reid of Kinloss, who, accredited by James on 27th February, 1533-4, were sent to England to conclude a treaty of amity with Henry VIII, which was signed on

¹ Addressed to James V, it is dated *Ex Dresda Misnie, Idibus Augusti, MDXXXIII*. It was printed at Leipzig *apud Michaelem Blum*. It contains 38pp., sigs A-D4, E3 verso.

² Cochlaeus, *Apol.*, sig. A1 verso.

³ *Ibid.*, sig. D verso ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. E2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. D verso.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B verso.

12th May.¹ In his *Apologia* Cochlaeus repeats his argument that the Scottish bishops did not prohibit the reading of the New Testament *simpliciter*, but only on the part of rude, contentious, curious laymen, and he assures King James that he is so disinterested in his attack on those now seeking to Lutheranise Scotland that he would gladly bear all the expense and hardship of pilgrimages to Rome or Compostella, if by so doing he could win Luther, Melanchthon and Alesius to the unity of the faith.²

The writings of Cochlaeus did not go unrewarded. He lost no time in sending a messenger to Scotland with a copy of his *Apologia* for the King, and in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer for September, 1534, we read: "Item. To ane servand of . . . Coeles, quhilk brocht fra his Maister an buyk intitulat . . . To his reward 1. li." From other sources³ we learn that Cochlaeus himself was nobly rewarded by the Archbishops of St. Andrews (James Beaton) and Glasgow (Gavin Dunbar) as well as King James. In March, 1533-4, Cochlaeus wrote a letter to James Beaton and with it sent a copy of the reply of the Lutheran princes (30th June, 1533) to the eight articles propounded to them by Clement VII, in which they affirm that they will submit their cause to the sole arbitraiment of Scripture.⁴ In his letter to the Scottish metropolitan Cochlaeus's main object is to point out how erroneous is the Lutheran rule of faith, viz., *non alium volunt agnoscerre iudicem quam sacram scripturam*, and how necessary it is that such should be supplemented by the authoritative judgment of the Church. Incidentally, he notes how in the *Epistola* of Alesius, a Scottish exile now dwelling in Wittenberg, the pastoral vigilance of the Scottish bishops is maligned (*ab Alesio Lutherano stylo et ingenio Philippi Melanchthonis*).⁵ He says that he sends the *Responsio* of the princes to confirm the Archbishop in his opposition to the attempts of apostates to propagate Lutheranism in Scotland.⁶ Alesius says⁷ that Cochlaeus was hired by the Scottish bishops "to spewe out all the poison in his bely" and to "barck" against the exile,

¹ Anderson, *Annals*, II, 467n, thinks that the critic must have been Bishop Stewart, who as Dean of Glasgow sat in judgment on Patrick Hamilton.

² Cochlaeus, *Apol.*, sig. E3 verso.

³ Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 263; Anderson, *Annals*, II, 477.

⁴ The letter to Beaton, dated *Ex Dresda Misnie ad Albim Quarto Idus Martii*, MDXXXIII, was printed in Black Letter by Wolfgang Stockel, Dresden, *Mense Martia*, 1534, along with *De futuro concilio rite celebrando*, the Pope's *Octo Articuli*, and the princes' *Responsio*; as it refers to this *Responsio* of 30th June, 1533, as having been sent some months ago we may infer that the letter to Beaton was written on 12th March, 1533-4, and not 1534-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C. ⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. C3 verso.

⁷ *Of the auctorite of the word*, sig. A ii, A ii verso.

and records that he was at Antwerp when a Scotsman, John Foster, sent money by a merchant to Cochlæus from James Beaton "which gegetteth him yerely so long as he liveth a certen stipend."¹ He also states that he saw a letter of Cochlæus to a Polish bishop "wherin he complayneth that he hath gret losse and evil fortune in setting forth of bokes, for as moch as no man wil wetesave to rede his bokes" and then begs a yearly stipend from the bishops of Poland to supplement the rewards he has received from the Scottish King and the Archbishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow.² He has also seen a copy of a letter of James V, in which the latter says that Cochlæus's book did the more please him for the commendation of King Ferdinand and Erasmus than for any study or diligence of the author.³ As Mitchell points out,⁴ Alesius did not go without his reward, namely, the furtherance which his writings gave to the movement for the free circulation of the English New Testament in Scotland, a movement which reached its climax in 1543 when the Scottish Parliament acknowledged the right of laymen to read the Scriptures and especially the New Testament in their mother tongue, and also the welcome whicli he was soon to receive in England, where his writings had made a favourable impression.

The barking of Cochlæus was effective. It grated on the sensitive ears of Alesius, who seems to have been constitutionally impatient of controversy and a lover of peace if it entailed no compromise with conviction. We have evidence of this temperamental aversion in his flight from St. Andrews, his departure from Wittenberg, and later from Cambridge. He remarks⁵ upon the fact that Cochlæus "was sorer greved with me for dwelling in that place where I did remayne"—evidently Wittenberg—"than he was with my matter or with any other thing els." He considered that Christ sometimes gave way to the fury of the Jews and that curs, tied to men's gates to bark, make no ado when no man is by them. He decided "to chang agayne that country where I was, specially seing I was called in to Ingland by the right noble lord Crumwel

¹ *Of the auctorite of the word*, Sig. A ii.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* ; v. Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 264 ; L & P, VII, 358.

⁴ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 263.

⁵ *Of the auctorite*, sig. A iii. *Et rabula se magis loco, in quo degebam, quam mihi, aut meae caussae irasci dare scriptisset* ; *De Authoritate Verbi*, p. 14. Cochlæus frequently and critically referred to Alesius's residence in Wittenberg ; v. *An Expediat*, sig. A 3 verso, L 5, L 5 verso ; *Letter to Beaton*, sig. C ; *Apologia*, A 1 verso, C verso, D verso, E 2.

and the Archbisshop of canterbery."¹ Alesius hoped that by going to England he would escape the scurrilous writings of Cochlaeus and he was not deceived. The serpent ceased its hissing when the Scot left Germany.² Soon he was lovingly received by Cranmer, Cromwell and Henry VIII himself.³ Thus Cochlaeus had the last word in the literary duel with Alesius and unwittingly helped to clinch the exile's resolution to accept the invitation to serve the cause of the Reformation in England.

Alesius was one of the first of a long line of learned reformers called from the Continent to help those engaged in the reconstruction of the Church of England. But he was not the first, as Dixon suggests.⁴ John Aepinus, Lutheran Superintendent in Hamburg (1532-1553), a personal friend of Luther, Melanchthon and, if not now, certainly in 1536, of Alesius,⁵ had recently returned from England where he had been occupied in this service for about six months (June, 1534, to Jan., 1535).⁶ Negotiations were also on foot for the employment in England of Melanchthon himself, with a view to the promotion of a rapprochement between Henry VIII and the Lutheran princes as a counter-measure to a possible coalition of the propapal powers. As early as August, 1534, Cochlaeus informed James V that the rumour had been current in Wittenberg some months before that Melanchthon had gone to England.⁷ For a while in 1535 there was strong competition between Francis I and Henry VIII for the German theologian's services.⁸ England almost won. The black Englishman, as Luther called Barnes, was instructed when in Germany to invite Melanchthon to England, and Mont was also commissioned by Henry to go to Germany to add his persuasion.⁹ Luther and Melanchthon were

¹ Alesius, *Of the auctorite*, sig. A iii. *Cogitabam de solo rursus vertendo, maxime cum a praeclarissimis Crumuello, et Archiepiscopo Canthuariensi essem in Britanniam vocatus*; *De Authoritate Verbi*, p. 14. In his "Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition" (1947), E. G. Rupp refers in depreciatory terms to A's raucous Scottish accent (*sic*), etc., and calls him "that self-appointed Chorus to the English Reformation." That as chorus Alesius was both actor and commentator is manifest, but the above reference makes the use of the word "self-appointed" questionable.

² *Ac proinde me ab huius polygraphi scurrilibus scriptionibus ea tum demum ratione securum fore sperabam, si in Angliam concederem, & obsurdescerem ad ipsius insanos clamores. Non fecellit me opinio, viper a sibilare desit.* *De Authoritate Verbi*, p. 15.

³ *Ego non tantum ab Archiepiscopo & illustri Crumuello, atque alijs summis & praestantissimis viris, verum etiam a generosissimo Rege amantissime sum exceptus.* *Ibid.*, p. 15. ⁴ I, 388. ⁵ v. *infra.*, 15.

⁶ v. Hauck, R. E. sub. nom.; v. Rupp, *Studies*, 42.

⁷ Cochlaeus, *Apologia*, sig. E 2. ⁸ L. & P., IX, Nos. 222, 299.

⁹ Barnes to Cromwell, from Hamburg, 22nd Aug., 1535, L. & P., IX, No. 153; Cromwell to (Wallop), 23rd Aug., 1535, *Ibid.*, IX, No. 157; Luther to Spalatin, 6th Sept., 1535, *Ibid.*, IX, No. 294; Mont to Cromwell, from Jainville, 7th Sept., 1535, *Ibid.*, IX, No. 299.

apparently willing that the invitation should be accepted.¹ On 5th October, 1535, Barnes wrote to Cromwell for money to pay the expenses of Melanchthon, whose visit to France was no longer being entertained, and whom he hoped to bring back to England with him.² But the scheme did not materialise, and on 9th June, 1536, Melanchthon told Camerarius that the tragic circumstances in England, which doubtless referred *inter alia* to the death of Queen Katherine and the execution of Queen Anne, had altered his plans and that his projected journey was definitely cancelled.³ He never went to England. It might be too much to regard Alesius as a substitute for Melanchthon, but in some respects he played this role. The two were close friends; their views were akin; probably Melanchthon had much to do with the Scot's being invited to England, and he certainly commended the latter most highly when he did go. Alesius said⁴ that it was at his instigation that Melanchthon dedicated the new edition of his *Loci* to Henry VIII, and the author sent a copy of it for the King by the Scotsman's hands.

Doubtless the fact that Alesius was the able literary opponent of Cochlaeus was in itself sufficient to make Henry VIII, Cromwell and Cranmer take a deep interest in the man, for the polemical German showed himself in 1535 the determined and bitter enemy of England's present religious policy. In February he published a book condemning Henry's divorce, entitled it *Congratulatio Disputatoria* and addressed it to Henry's foe, Pope Paul III.⁵ Cromwell reported to the King that he had read the book carefully, but saw nothing new in it, and thought that its author, whom he had met at Ratisbon, was of so little estimation in Germany that an answer was not worth while.⁶ Shortly after the death of Fisher and More, Cochlaeus again ran full tilt against Henry and his government in a defence of these martyrs.⁷ This second attack on Henry rankled sorely. On 30th June, 1535, Chapuys reported to the Emperor that Cromwell had expressed to him the King's complaint that Charles

¹ Luther to Pontanus, 12th Sept., 1535, *Ibid.*, IX, No. 355; v. Melanchthon to Camerarius, 5th Oct., 1535, *Ibid.*, IX, No. 546.

² From Wittenberg. *Ibid.*, IX, No. 543.

³ L. & P., X, No. 1106.

⁴ v. *infra*, p. 29.

⁵ It was printed, Feb., 1535, in Leipzig, by Michael Blum, who had printed the *Apologia* the year before. Its full title is *De Matrimonio Serennissimi Regis Angliae Henrici Octavi, Congratulatio Disputatoria Johannis Cochlei Germani ad Paulum Tertium Pont. Max.*, 1535; v. L. & P., VIII, No. 1125 (2).

⁶ L. & P., VIII, No. 1126.

⁷ *Defensio Clarissimorum virorum Joannis Fyscheri episcopi Roffensis et Thomae Mori baronis et cancellarii Angliae, adversus Richardum Sampsonem Anglum.* *Ibid.*, VIII., No. 975.

had allowed Cochlaeus to publish defamatory books against him, and that worse could not be said against a Jew or the Devil. Chapuys had assured Cromwell that Charles would be sorry and would take what measures he could, but had slyly pointed out that in Germany license and disorder—the implication being that these were due to the spread of Lutheranism—were so rampant that it was difficult to control all tongues, which were so unbridled that they had no respect for God or for their princes. He had suggested that Henry should write to Duke George of Saxony, within whose domains the obnoxious Cochlaeus lived.¹ In July Cranmer and others were considering the preparation of an answer to Cochlaeus's *Defensio*.² Before the end of the month Barnes had landed in Antwerp.³ He was on his way via Hamburg to Saxony and had been commissioned to complain to Duke George about Cochlaeus. He was anxious to dispute in person with the latter on his own dunghill, and to vindicate Henry's good name by stopping the fool's tongue before his own prince.⁴ The ambassadors who were soon to follow Barnes were also instructed to redeem their King's honour from Cochlaeus's vilification.⁵ Cochlaeus being thus so much in the focus of English interest at this time, it was only natural that the Scot with whom he had waged literary war during the two previous years should capture the attention of Henry and his advisers. Probably they had read his writings, and his able and temperate advocacy of the use by laymen of the Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, in the vernacular, would make a special appeal to Cromwell and Cranmer, who now invited Alesius to come and help them in their reforming work in England.

When did Alesius go to England? Christopher Anderson, the first modern writer to give the Scottish exile his due and to assess his significance in the annals of the English Bible, places his arrival in the spring of 1535.⁶ Mitchell⁷ states that he came in 1535, "having received encouragement from the agents of the English King then negotiating an alliance with the Protestant princes in Germany." This statement needs clarification. Presumably Mitchell means that these agents gave this encouragement when in Germany and he refers to Barnes, Foxe, Heath and others. Only the first of these requires consideration, for the others

¹ 30th June, 1535, Chapuys to Charles V, L. & P., VIII, No. 948.

² *Ibid.*, VIII, No. 1125. ³ *Ibid.*, VIII, No. 1109.

⁴ *Ibid.*, IX, Nos. 18, 153, 543. ⁵ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 825.

⁶ Anderson, *Annals*, II, 478. The latest scholar to deal with the time of Alesius's arrival and the length of his stay in England is singularly hazy: Baxter, *Records Scot. Ch. Hist. Soc.*, V, Pt. ii (1934), p. 94. He gives the impression that A. spent three years in England after his *Responsio*, which he with questionable accuracy dates 1533, was published.

⁷ *Scot. Ref.*, 266.

did not leave England until after Alesius had come over.¹ Barnes arrived in Antwerp on his way to Germany on 26th July;² on 24th August he intimated to Cromwell that he was starting out for Wittenberg from Hamburg; next day he wrote to Cromwell from Lunenberg saying that he was on his way to Wittenberg. Barnes therefore probably arrived in the latter city towards the end of August. Melanchthon, in a letter dated August, 1535, to Henry VIII, says that he has given a book to Alesius to be presented to the King,³ and in a letter to Cranmer, similarly dated, he commends Alesius and says that the latter is now going to England and will show the Archbishop one of his writings, and asks Cranmer, if he approves of it, to have it submitted to the King.⁴ The earliest date of Alesius's departure is thus fixed as August, 1535, and if Barnes saw the Scot in Germany before the latter left there it was probably at the very end of that month.⁵

Evidently Alesius arrived in England in September, 1535. On 1st October Henry VIII wrote to Melanchthon⁶ thanking him for the letter brought by Alesius and for the book dedicated to himself, and referring him further to a letter from Cromwell. This letter, however, had not been received by Melanchthon when, on 4th October, he wrote to Mont,⁷ asking to be commended to Alesius, who, he trusted, was by this time in England and had delivered a copy of his *Commonplaces*; he added a testimonial to the merits of the godly and learned Scot, who was worthy to be lovingly welcomed. Apparently Cromwell had been instructed to send a tangible token of Henry's appreciation of the new book. There are two references in his Memoranda or Remembrances to the matter: "Melanchthons book, *De locis communibus*"⁸ and "For Melankton, 300 cr."⁹ On 1st December, Melanchthon wrote thanking the King for his letter and gift, and also again took occasion to commend his friend Alesius.¹⁰

¹ L. & P., IX, pp. ix, x, Nos. 563, 589, 979. ² *Ibid.*, VIII, No. 1109.

³ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 224; *Corp. Ref.*, II, 920. The book was the new edition of the *Loci*, not the commentary on Romans, as Anderson says, *op. cit.*, I, 45.

⁴ L. & P., IX, No. 225; *Corp. Ref.*, II, 930.

⁵ We say Germany because Alesius may have gone temporarily from Wittenberg, as most of the Professors did at this time owing to pestilence. Barnes to Cromwell, 22nd Aug., 1535, from Hamburg, says that Melanchthon with other Professors had left W. probably for Jena. L. & P., IX, No. 153. Gairdner, *Hist.*, 175, says that A. came over from Belgium; Constant, 301n, says from Flanders; Foxe, V, 378n, says from Antwerp.

⁶ L. & P., IX, No. 508; *Corp. Ref.*, II, 947.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 540. ⁸ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 213 (4). ⁹ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 219.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, IX, No. 918; *Corp. Ref.*, II, 995. Melanchthon's interest in A. is also shown in a letter to Spalatin (L. & P., VIII, No. 636; *Corp. Ref.*, II, 872), 1535, in which he enquires regarding money due to A.

The first recorded official post in England occupied by the King's scholar, as Alesius was now styled, was a divinity lectureship at Cambridge University. In the autobiographical passages of his book "*Of the Auctorite of the Word of God*" there is much that relates to his career in England. We learn that he was sent to Cambridge by the Chancellor of the University at the King's command (*Cancellarius Academiae, qui me ex mandato Regis eo miserat*).¹ Anderson, assuming that the arrival of Alesius was about six months earlier than it really was, identifies the Chancellor in question with Bishop Fisher, who died on 22nd June, 1535.² The new evidence, however, points to Cromwell, who was appointed Fisher's successor by the houses of the regents and nonregents at the end of August.³ Alesius resided at Queen's College, Cambridge. Of this we learn in a letter of his to Bucer fifteen years afterwards. "*Audivi*," he wrote,⁴ "*... te ... nunc profiteri sacras literas Cantabrigiae, ubi ego olim habui jucundissimum sodalitium in collegio Reginae. Hoc tantum molestum fuit, quod cogebat sequi Crumuellum pro stipendio, quod nondum persolutum est.*" The Scot was blazing the trail in Cambridge for reformers like Bucer and for others even more advanced or more Puritanical, who came to find in it a congenial centre from which to further the cause of the English Reformation.

Alesius is said to have been the first to lecture in Cambridge on the Hebrew Scriptures.⁵ We have evidence that he began a course on the Psalms, but none that he lectured on the Hebrew text and not that of the Vulgate. An interesting reference to his course is made by Edward Plankney, in a letter from Cambridge to Cromwell on 6th April, 1536, in which he says that he and Cromwell's nephew, Christopher Wellyfed, sometimes consorted with Alexander Alesius, a man not less pious than learned and upright, who was then lecturing on the Psalms.⁶ Alesius had scarcely finished his exposition of the eighth Psalm when serious opposition to him arose.⁷ He tells the tale of it with some fulness in his book, "*Of*

¹ *De Authoritate Verbi Dei*, p. 16.

² Anderson, *Annals*, I, 451, II, 478.

³ v. intimation of his election in letter of Vice-Chancellor, John Crayford, to Cromwell, 30th Aug., 1535. L. & P., IX, No. 208.

⁴ Cited by Searle, W. G., *Hist. of Queen's*, (1867), 192.

⁵ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 266.

⁶ L. & P., VIII, 507. This item is dated 1535 by Gairdner, but we regard this as one of the numerous chronological misplacements that occur in his Calendar. v. L. & P., VIII, No. 107, 26th Jan. (1535), Wellyfed to Cromwell, from Cambridge, regarding his admission to King's Hall.

⁷ *Vix octavum Psalmum enarraveram, cum sensi insidias hostis me volentis rursus involuere contentionibus. De Auth. Verbi Dei*, p. 15.

*the Auctorite of the Word of God,"*¹ and shows how it terminated his brief academic career at Cambridge. We have already spoken of his constitutional dislike of contention. On this occasion it was again revealed. Conscious of it and aware that it might be misconstrued as cowardice, he says that although he naturally loathed contentions and did his best to avoid them, yet he never submitted in weakness to the Devil and never recanted any of his Christian convictions.² In order to vindicate his teaching, he went to the schools where a large audience had gathered to hear his disputation with his adversary, but the latter did not appear.³ Bad feeling, however, had been engendered by his opponents and he thought that his life was in peril.⁴ He took counsel with some of the wisest members of the University and explained his position to the Vice-Chancellor (John Crayford), who evidently regarded his case unsympathetically.⁵ Accordingly, for the sake of his own peace and that of the University, and especially because he could not conscientiously approve of the University statutes, which had been imposed by the Bishops and the Privy Council, and because, to uphold them would in his opinion be wickedness, and to denounce them would by most be regarded as seditious and be displeasing to his patron, Cromwell, he decided to resign his lectureship and return to London.⁶ There is, however, in this explanation of his resignation, no warrant for the assertion⁷ that it was because of an alleged infringement of the statutes that the opposing party drove him from his post. In his letter to Elizabeth, 1st September, 1559,⁸ Alesius said that as soon as Henry VIII began to hate Anne Boleyn, laws hostile to the purer doctrine of the Gospel appeared and that, seeing he could not bear them with a good conscience and seeing his profession could not allow him to dissemble, for he was then filling the office of

¹ v. Anderson, *Annals*, II, 478-9.

² *Contentionibus, a quibus etsi natura abhorreo, & eas summo semper studio fugi, tamen nunquam me turpiter dedi Diabolo, nec unquam usquam aliquid recantavi. De Auth. Verbi*, p. 15.

³ *Veni ad frequentissimum auditorium Academiae, & antagonistam aliquot horis coram multitudine expectavi, & quamvis ille a congressu, nescio quo consilio, abstineret. Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴ *Tamen tantam mihi conflavit invidiam, ut palam aliqui mihi minitarentur mortem. Ibid.*

⁵ *Id cum ad Vicecancellarium retulisset, ex summorum istic virorum consilio, & viderem eum ad ista connivere, cessi. Ibid.*

⁶ *Statuta quaedam ab Episcopis & senatu regni emissam esse, quibus non reclamare esset impium & quae reprehendere seditiosum diceretur. Non absterrebatur meo periculo, sed Cancellarius . . . non sinebat suorum quenquam loqui contra leges publicas. Quare cogitabam tempori serviendum esse. Ibid.*

⁷ Pratt, ed. Foxe, V, 378n; Baxter, *op. cit.*, 95.

⁸ S. P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1303.

reader at Cambridge by the King's orders, he went to Court and through Cromwell asked for his release. Cromwell, however, retained him, presumably as King's scholar, for about three years more with empty hopes.

Alesius now decided, presumably in order to earn a livelihood, to enter the medical profession, of which he already knew something.¹ He attached himself to the celebrated London practitioner, Dr. Nicolas—probably the Italian, de Burgo—and served with him for several years. Eventually he was persuaded by his friends to practise himself, which, he says, he did, not without success.²

Dixon suggests³ that the principal duty of Alesius, as king's scholar, was to act as the Vicar General's theological assistant. We believe that the Scot served Cromwell as such far more than has been realised by historians. The investigation of this hypothesis calls for serious attention. If substantiated, it would throw considerable light upon Cromwell's religious policy, and at the same time increase the importance of the part played by Alesius in English history. Alesius was convinced that the people ought to have access to the Scriptures in the vernacular, and that the young ought to have efficient instruction, at home and in the Church, in the fundamentals of the Faith. A cursory reading of his *Epistola* and *Responsio* is sufficient to bear out this affirmation. It is noteworthy that Wilding, who in his biography of Cromwell has no axe to grind on behalf of Alesius and does not even mention the Scotsman's name, lays emphasis upon the dominance of these two significant guiding principles in Cromwell's religious programme. This author affirms⁴ that Cromwell gave the people the Bible in English in order to ensure the permanency of the breach with Rome and that he gave many of the monastic lands to members of the aristocracy for the same purpose. He also speaks of the insistence upon the religious education of children as characteristic of Cromwell.⁵ It was while Alesius was in England that Cromwell secured Henry's permission for the publication of the Scriptures in English to the unbounded joy of Cranmer, Latimer, Shaxton and doubtless of the Scottish exile himself,⁶ and that the clergy were enjoined to make pro-

¹ *Volebam praedicationem crucis cum professione medica, cuius ante principia tenebam, commutare.* *De Auth. Verbi*, p. 16.

² *Ideoque contuli me ad Medicum doctissimum D. Nicolaum, qui Londini multos nunc annos exercuit Medicinam summa cum laude, ac familiariter sum usus eius consuetudine aliquot annos, & multa vidi, multa didici, quae in hac arte sunt etiam praecipua, ita, ut tandem a quibusdam amicis persuasus publice morbos etiam inceperim curare, ac non infeliciter.* *Ibid.*

³ Dixon, I, 388, 520.

⁴ P. Wilding, *Thomas Cromwell*, 213, 310.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶ Aug., 1537. Strype. *Mem. of Cranmer*, 83, 86.

vision for the setting up of the whole Bible of the largest volume, in English, in all their Churches and to encourage their parishioners to study the same.¹ We also observe that among the injunctions sent by Cromwell, as Chancellor, to the University of Cambridge, were these:² lectures should be given on the Scriptures instead of the Sentences, that all students should be permitted to read the Scriptures privately and to attend lectures on them. Shortly afterwards Cromwell sent Alesius to Cambridge to stimulate the study of Scriptures there and to give a course of lectures in accordance with these decisions. In the Injunctions (1536, 1538) issued by Cromwell as Henry's vice-gerent in spiritual affairs, we note that the clergy are ordained to admonish parents, masters and governors of youth to teach or cause their children to be taught even from infancy the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments in their mother tongue, and that these directions are in harmony with the principles propounded by Alesius.³ Cromwell in his Injunctions of 1538 (par. 5) and Alesius in his *Epistola* display a similar interest in the catechetical method, the former thinking of those desirous of partaking at "God's board" and the latter specially of children. Thus these two men reveal a considerable community of interest and it is certainly remarkable that this should be shown in Cromwell's public utterances at the very time when Alesius was behind the scenes and had his ear.

After our glimpse of Alesius lecturing in Cambridge in April, 1536, we see him the next month in London in a state of great concern. Early in the morning of 19th May he woke up from a dream, expressive of his apprehension, in which he had seen the truncated corpse of Anne Boleyn. He arose in terror, crossed the Thames to Lambeth Palace, and in its garden, before four o'clock a.m., met Cranmer walking in woe. He told his vision to the Archbishop, who informed him that Anne was to be executed that very day: "She who has been Queen of England upon earth will to-day become a Queen in heaven." Then Cranmer burst into tears. The Scot, horrified and grief-laden, returned to his lodging, which, although it was near the place of execution, he would not leave in order to witness the death of one whom both he and Cranmer revered so much. The story is told by Alesius in his letter to Elizabeth the year after her accession.⁴

There are several extant letters of Alesius belonging to the year 1536. In one to Aepinus of Hamburg, dated from London the 31st July,⁵ he

¹ 30th Sept., 1538. Gee & Hardy, *Docs.*, 275.

² Oct., 1535. L. & P., IX, No. 615; Cooper, *Annals*, I, 375.

³ Gee & Hardy, *Docs.*, 272, 276; v. Anderson, *Annals*, II, 459.

⁴ 1st Sept., 1559. S.P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1303.

⁵ L. & P., XI, No. 185; Corp. Ref., III, 104.

states that he had sent letters at Whitsuntide by Alexander, a Scottish bookseller, enclosing some for Melanchthon. It was probably the news Alesius then sent to Wittenberg that put a final stop to Melanchthon's projected visit to England.¹ Now Alesius speaks of danger, probably due to the political and other changes involved in the death of Katherine and the execution of Anne. He has sent certain articles, which he has translated into Latin, and which he desires Aepinus to forward to Wittenberg. The editor of the *Corpus Reformatorum*² suggests that the articles were those recently propounded by the English delegates at Wittenberg. But considering the fact that the Wittenberg articles³ were examined, and in all likelihood in Latin, months before in Wittenberg itself, and seeing that Alesius now says that from his letter to Melanchthon and these articles Aepinus will see that a new crisis has arisen in England, and that he has translated them from English into Latin because it is of the utmost importance that the Duke of Saxony and the German theologians should know them,⁴ it is probable that the Scot had translated the Ten Articles, approved fully a fortnight before by Convocation, to let the Lutherans see how the ecclesiastical wind was blowing in England.⁵ These Articles, constituting the first Confession of the reformed Church of England, were the least explicitly Catholic of all Henry's Confessions, but they were not Lutheran, although they contained a few apparent concessions to Lutheranism, and in some places repeated some parts of the recent Wittenberg articles drawn up by Melanchthon. They were doctrinally orthodox, and although they omitted mention of four of the Roman Catholic sacraments, they did not deny them.⁶ Luther, writing on 20th September, 1536, to Hausmann,⁷ discloses some of the information conveyed to Wittenberg by Alesius. He says that the Scot has reported that the new Queen, Jane Seymour, is an enemy of the Gospel,

¹ Melanchthon told Camerarius, 9th June, 1536 (L. & P., X, No. 1106), that owing to the tragic circumstances which had arisen in England his journey thither was now absolutely cancelled.

² III, 104. Bretschneider's note runs thus: *Sunt articuli Regis Angliae per legatus suos Vitebergae propositi, qui ipsi in Actis Vinariensis habentur bis, tum manu Francisci Burchardi, tum Alesii ipsius scripti latine, et semel germanice.*

³ For Wittenberg Articles of 1536 v. Rupp, *op. cit.*, 111.

⁴ *Sed iam ex articulis et literis ad dominum Philippum meis intelliges, in quo discrimine versamur. . . . Refert etiam Ducis Saxoniae et vestrum omnium scire articulos, quare ego ex vernacula anglica latine verti.* Alesius to Aepinus, 31st July, 1536. *Corp. Ref.*, III, 104.

⁵ Foxe promises to send Melanchthon a copy of the Ten Articles in Latin (Luther, *Letters*, Weimar ed., Vol. VIII, pp. 220-3), ref. given by Rupp, *op. cit.*, 110. Was Foxe referring to Alesius's translation?

⁶ v. Constant, 400-407. For comparison of the Ten and the Wittenberg Articles v. Rupp, *op. cit.*, 113-114.

⁷ L. & P., XI, No. 475.

and that, although Henry is still anti-papal, the religious state of England is greatly altered for the worse and that as a sign of the existing peril Barnes is now in hiding.

About November, 1536, Alesius sent a letter of five pages to Cranmer, in which he considered the causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace and put forward constructive proposals, which again reveal his deep educational interests, to prevent a recurrence of such movements.¹ He denies that the suppression of the monasteries, those slaughter houses of the conscience, was the cause of the rebellion. The real cause was the old papistical doctrine, which taught the Lincolnshire rustics to take up arms against their king in defence of priestly and monkish insanities. The real way to promote the Gospel and the peace of the country was to abolish the papistical leaven, and more specifically the mass, celibacy and monasticism. He urges that even in the teeth of the bishops, if necessary, steps should be taken at once to see that priests should be appointed who shall preach a pure Gospel, and that to ensure their attainment of the proper standards, their admission should not depend upon the bishops, but that they should be examined in the universities. The latter, being too much governed by those who do not favour the Gospel, certainly need reform. Alesius advocates the establishment of lectureships in the larger towns for the benefit of priests who cannot attend the universities, and of schools in every city, in which boys may imbibe the elements of piety along with their letters. To support his contentions he refers to the Duke of Saxony, who has preserved peace in his dominions while others have been disturbed by civil dissensions.

So far we have had only inferential ground for the establishment of the hypothesis that Alesius was a religious adviser to Cromwell. Now we have a fact to adduce in support of it. There is extant a Latin letter of one page, endorsed *Alesius studens*, addressed by Alesius to Cromwell, about November, 1536,² in which the writer speaks of his taking his writing about tithes to the vice-gerent at Windsor. The question of tithes was a burning one in 1536, and there are several unsigned documents of that year dealing with the subject, and in particular with the recent legislation thereanent, e.g., 27 Hen. VIII, c. 20.³ A closer investigation of these papers would be well worth while, and we suspect that the hand of the Scottish exile, exercising the function of ecclesiastical coadjutor to Henry's vice-gerent, will be found in them.

Singularly enough, in the above letter to Cromwell regarding tithes, Alesius has most to say about his own material maintenance. He is

¹ L. & P., XI, No. 987. ² *Ibid.*, XI, No. 988. ³ *Ibid.*, XI, Nos. 85, 106, 204.

surprised that Cromwell has accused him of importunity, for he has neither received nor asked for anything since Whitsuntide, presumably after leaving Cambridge. He points out that Cromwell gave him a warrant to ask for money every quarter. In his need he now begs his patron to free himself from his importunity by providing him with a prebend. That Cromwell was not unmindful of his adviser's needs and services is borne out by certain items in his accounts. These show that payments of £5 were paid to Alesius on 4th January, 28th March, 28th May, and 24th October, 1537, that on 19th February, 1538, Alesius was paid 10 marks, and that on 13th October, 1538, the sum of £5 was given to Richard Morison to be paid by Cromwell's command to the Scot.¹ His regular salary or stipend as King's scholar or lecturer, however, does not seem to have been paid. On the eve of his departure from England in 1539 Cranmer expressed regret that Alesius had been deprived of his salary for three years by Cromwell, and that he then had no money to meet the Scot's travelling expenses.²

We now come to the outstanding and best known instance of Alesius serving as Cromwell's ecclesiastical aide or counsellor, namely, the occasion when he, at the vice-gerent's command, addressed a prelatical assembly on the number of the sacraments. Among historians there exists much confusion regarding it. By many it is placed in 1536;³ some say that it took place in 1536 or 1537;⁴ a few suggest its occurrence in 1537.⁵ Most of those who place the meeting in 1536 assume that it was the Convocation which met from 9th June to 20th July, and that Alesius took part in the debate on the Ten Articles, the first Confession of the Henrician Church.⁶ Foxe of Hereford's presence at the opening meeting is in itself proof that it was not that of Convocation on 9th June, 1536, for according to Chapuys in his dispatch from London, on 14th July, to the Emperor, he stated that the Bishop returned to England from his German mission only ten days before.⁷ The date therefore is 1537 and the meeting was not Convocation—there was none that year—but a special assembly of prelates

¹ L. & P., XIV, Pt. ii, pp. 328-338; v. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 299n.

² S.P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1303. v. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 299.

³ Foxe, ed. Pratt, V, 378; Anderson, *Annals*, I, 498; Gairdner, *Hist.* (1902), 175; Constant, 301.

⁴ Hardwick, *Hist. Ref.*, 182n; Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 267; Baxter, *op. cit.*, 95.

⁵ Gairdner, *Lolly*, II, 279; McEwen, I, 463; Gairdner, L. & P., XII, Pt. i, No. 790n. Dixon (I, 521n; v, 411n) says that in the first two editions of his *History* he followed Burnet, Collier, and the Parker Society editor of Cranmer's *Remains* in dating the event 1536, but in the third edition (1895) he assigns it to 1537.

⁶ Anderson, Constant, etc., as *supra*. McEwen (I, 463) says it was Convocation in 1537!

⁷ L. & P., XI, No. 80.

and other divines called by Henry to formulate his second Confession, which was issued under the title, "The Institution of a Christian Man" and was commonly known as the Bishops' Book.¹ Shortly after his appearance at this meeting Alesius himself wrote an account of the opening debate, in which he took part, in his book, *De Authoritate Verbi Dei Liber Alexandri Alesij, contra Episcopum Lundensem*, which was not published till 1542.² Although the preface is dated from Frankfurt-on-Oder, 1st May, 1540, the book seems to have been written several years before,³ for in it Alesius speaks of writing his *Epistola* of 1533 "ante biennium," which words, evidently a mistake for "ante quinquennium" (the later word in the original script probably having a contracted beginning), are translated in the English version, "abowt v yere agone." If these findings are correct the "De Authoritate" was written before Alesius left England and before the death of Stokesley, Bishop of London (8th Sept., 1539), who was his chief adversary at the session in question and the person signified by the words of the title, "*Episcopum Lundensem.*"⁴

The English translation is entitled, "Of the auctorite of the word of god agaynst the bishop of london / wherein are conteyned certen disputacyons had in the parlament howse betwenc the bisshops abowt the nomber of the sacraments and other things / very necessary to be known / made by Alexander Alane Scot and sent to the Duke of Saxon." It omits the long preface addressed in the Latin work to the Duke of Saxony and dated 1540, but seems to refer to it in the title, and it also leaves untranslated the last 52 pages of the Latin book.⁵ This rare little volume of 46 leaves is printed in Black Letter, but its date and press are not

¹ Reprinted in Lloyd's *Formularies*. For an account of the assembly v. Dixon, I, 518ff, who calculates that it was attended by the bishops of both provinces, 8 archdeacons and 17 doctors.

² The preface, which is addressed to Duke John Frederick of Saxony, is dated *Francfordiae ad Oderam. Calend. Maijs. an. Domini M.D.XL*, and the colophon runs thus: *Argentorati apud Cratonem Mylium an. Domini MDXLII, mense Septembri.* Copies in St. Andrews and Edin. Univ. Libs.

³ Ca. 1538, not in 1541 as Ath. Cant. and Anderson, *Annals* (II, 477n) state.

⁴ Constant (302n), maybe misled by the fact that the book was published after Stokesley's death, erroneously states that it was directed against his successor in the London see, Bonner.

⁵ *De Authoritate* has 132pp—sigs. AH8 plus pp. 129, 130 without sigs plus p. (131) with colophon plus p. (132) with device, viz., an enlargement of that on t-p, i.e., a lion with column in left paw. Praefatio (pp. 3-12) and pp. 78-130 are untranslated in the English version, "Of the auctorite." The latter is unpaginated, but contains 92 pp.—t-p plus blank plus Aii-F 6 verso; the collation is sigs. A-E8 F6 verso.

given.¹ It seems however to have been published after 1542, when the Latin version was issued. Dixon² says that Gairdner has assigned the book to 1537, but that is not correct. Gairdner merely places his summary of it in his calendar of that year³ because a considerable section of the book is concerned with the debate, in which Alesius took part, in the prelatical assembly of 1537 and because the preceding item in his calendar mentions the theological disputations in that meeting.

Many excerpts from this book, because of their interesting auto-biographical details and the light incidentally shed upon contemporary men and events, have been cited by recent historians, but the portion of it most widely known since the sixteenth century is that in which Alesius recounts the opening discussions of the clerical council which produced the Bishops' Book. The reason for this is that Foxe incorporated this section almost verbatim in his *Acts and Monuments*.⁴

There are numerous references to this assembly in the extant records of 1537. Cranmer called it the learned council of the archbishops, bishops and others;⁵ Foxe of Hereford called it a meeting of bishops and doctors convoked by the King to compile certain rudiments of Christianity and a catechism.⁶ We learn from contemporary documents that it lasted from February to 23rd July, 1537,⁷ and that the fruit of it, "The Institution of a Christian Man," was printed by the end of August.⁸ We learn that "The Institution" was hailed with joy by men like Archbishop Lee because it restored the four sacraments omitted in the Ten Articles,⁹ that a common popular rumour alleged that the book had put the new learning to silence,¹⁰ that Cranmer tried to put a good face on it by stating that it restored old good usages such as prevailed in the primitive Church,¹¹ and that reformers like Latimer were filled with misgiving, fearing that it contained too many elements of the old leaven and hoping that the

¹ B.M. Cat. suggests 1537 at Leipzig; Baxter, *op. cit.* 99, suggests Leipzig ? 1543 ? Copies are in Signet Lib., Edin., B.M., Lambeth Palace, St. Paul's Cath. v. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 268n, 302. Anderson, *Annals*, II, 479n, errs when he charges the printer with a strange blunder in attributing the work to Alexander Alane, instead of Ales; he thinks that this was due to confusion of the author's surname with that of the translator, Edmund Allen. But the author's surname was Alane or Allan (v. *Early Records of St. Andrews Univ.*, S.H.S. 104, 211). Edmund Allen afterwards translated the Apocalypse in the Paraphrases of Erasmus, served as chaplain to Princess Elizabeth in the reign of Edward VI, became Bishop of Rochester in 1559 and died a few months after his exaltation (Oct., 1559). John Bale (*Scriptores Majoris Britanniae* (1557), Cent. Nona, p. 720) ascribes the translation to him.

² I, 521n. ³ L. & P., XII, pt. i, No. 790.

⁴ V, 378ff. ⁵ L. & P., XII, pt. ii, No. 703. ⁶ *Ibid.*, XII, pt. ii, No. 410.

⁷ *Ibid.*, XII, pt. i, Nos. 457, 708, 1068, 1187; XII, pt. ii, Nos. 289, 293.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XII, pt. ii, No. 578. ⁹ *Ibid.*, XII, pt. i, No. 789.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XII, pt. ii, No. 846. ¹¹ *Ibid.*

King would add a note to the effect that these were to be tolerated only temporarily as a concession to the frailty and spiritual ineptitude of his subjects.¹

As Latimer looked back on the proceedings of this council² he felt that he would rather be the poor parson of Kynton than the Bishop of Worcester, for he found it a troublesome thing to seek uniformity of belief, and the conclusions reached after much controversy were too much of a compromise for his liking. Doubtless Alesius held a similar opinion. He had been given an opportunity to express his mind at the beginning of the council, but it was obvious that he was in a minority and that most of the bishops were against him. In his *De Authoritate* he gives a detailed account of his experience. "Unto this disputacion," he wrote, "I came sodenly unprepared, for as I did mete bi chance in the streate the right excellent lord Crumwel going unto the parlament howse in the yeare 1537, he whan he sawe me, called me unto him & toke me with him to the parlament house to Westmyster (*sic*) where we fownd all the bisshops gathered together."³ We read that Cromwell presided as Henry's vice-gerent and that in his presidential address he reminded his hearers that they had been specially convoked by the King to determine certain theological controversies and to seek doctrinal unity, and that the King desired them to conclude all things by the Word of God, but to have a care not to wrest or deface the Scriptures by any glosses, papistical laws, decrees of doctors or councils. Then Stokesley, a champion of the old Faith, a conservative die-hard, arose to maintain the seven sacraments. There ensued an inconclusive debate at the end of which Cranmer made an oration in which he marshalled the points at issue. He thought that the definition of a sacrament was necessary and that the number to be observed in the Church should be determined. It was at this point that Cromwell asked Alesius to intervene, and explaining to the bishops that he was the King's scholar, Cromwell begged them to give him an impartial hearing.⁴

¹ L. & P., XII, pt. ii, No. 295; other refs. to the council and its work are *Ibid.*, Nos. 330, 401-405, 555, 618, 703, 841.

² *Ibid.*, XI, pt. ii, No. 295. 21st July, 1537.

³ *Of the auctorite*, sig. A5; *De Authoritate*, p. 18: *Ad hanc disputationem casu quodam imparatus veni, cum illustrem & magnificum virum Crumuellum tempore conuentus Regni, qui habitus est anno tricesimo septimo, offendissem in publico, euntem ad Synodum Episcoporum. Is enim ubi me vidit, accersi iubet & secum ducit ad sacrum senatum, qui Vuestmonasterij convenerat, illic invenimus Episcopos congregatos.*

⁴ *Et quia hanc Archiepiscopi orationem admodum mihi placere, nescio quo nutu, significabam. . . . Iussit me illustris Crumuellus dicere, quid de hac disputatione sentirem, praefatus tamen ad Episcopos, me esse Scholasticum Regis, ac proinde petebat, ut me aequis animis audirent.* *De Authoritate*, p. 23. v. Foxe, V, 380.

In his impromptu speech Alesius, following the lead of Cranmer, tackled the question of the nature of a sacrament. He pointed out that if a sacrament were defined as a ceremony instituted by Christ to signify a special virtue of the Gospel, there are only two, but if it were defined as any ceremony which contained the signification of a holy thing, then there could be seven or even more. He followed Paul in accepting the first definition, and was busy proving that Augustine, Aquinas and others did the same, when he was interrupted by the infuriated Stokesley, who denied that the Church's sacraments required an express Scriptural basis or the signification of remission of sins. Alesius replied that he could prove his point by the testimony of ancient doctors and schoolmen as well as by Scripture. Foxe of Hereford now sought to throw oil on the troubled waters. He advised Alesius not to adduce the testimony of men and reminded him that the King wished their controversies to be determined by Scriptural rule alone. Then he admonished the members of the assembly that they must beware of becoming a laughing stock to the laity by relying upon their wonted authority. They must base their tenets upon truth and not depend upon the Pope or the lapse of time to cure heresy, and he warned them that laymen nowadays knew the Scriptures better than many of his hearers.¹ Encouraged by Foxe's oration, Alesius now proved syllogistically that without the Word there cannot be a real sacrament. He denied the value of the outward ceremony, except as a token and medium of that lively inflammation which is received through faith. He affirmed that only Christ could institute a sacrament and fortified his arguments by citations from St. Paul. Again the Scot was interrupted by Stokesley who, while admitting that the sacraments ought to be based upon the divine Word, denied that this is to be identified with what souters and cobblers read in their mother tongue. He charged those who believed that Christian doctrine must have express Biblical sanction and warrant, with Lutheranism, and affirmed that there is also the unwritten Word of God contained in tradition and the teaching of the Church's doctors, which is as authoritative as the Scriptures.

Cromwell, Cranmer and the reformers among the Bishops smiled when they saw Stokesley resorting to his old sophistry and unwritten varieties.² Alesius was anxious to reply to the Bishop, but Cromwell restrained him on the ground that it was twelve noon and time to end the session. The Scot then made the protestation that if he proved that

¹ *Erfordiensis Episcopus . . . qui nuperrime ex obita in Germaniam legatione redierat . . . inquit . . . Notiores sunt sacri libri prophanis nunc hominibus. quam multis nostrum. De Authoritate, p. 26-7.*

² *Subrisissent aliquantulum cum viderent eum statim initio disputationis confugere ad veterem sophisticam & veritates non scriptas. De Authoritate, p. 31.*

Christianity rested upon the Word of God which is written in the Bible, surely Stokesley would grant that there are no sacraments but those confirmed therein. The latter agreed, and the assembly was adjourned till next day, when Cranmer sent his archdeacon—probably his own brother Edmund—to say that the other bishops disliked the admission of Alesius, a stranger, to their disputation. Alesius told this to Cromwell, who thought it best to yield to the bishops, because he did not wish the exile to incur their hatred and bade the latter give him the paper in which Alesius had written his arguments, in order that he might show it to Stokesley and the others in the council. In this paper¹ Alesius denounces Cochlaeus and other blasphemous liars, who for the belly's sake have saleable tongues, and accuses the Bishop of London of impudent blasphemy, then cites Biblical texts, Cyril and Augustine to prove that the Scriptures are the only foundation of the Christian faith.

Thus Alesius brought to the forefront the vital problem of authority. The debate with Stokesley revealed the strong opposition between the two parties, the old and the new learning, the orthodox and those who fain would be called *Evangelici*, the upholders of the ecclesiastical *status quo* and the advocates of the Bible. Although brought by Alesius to a focus, the problem remained unsettled, and it was left to the future for clarification and solution. Baxter says² that Alesius on this occasion earned the bitter antagonism of the supporters of the old Church and the warm friendship of many in the English Church. It is doubtful whether Stokesley himself would have distinguished the "old" from the "English" Church. He wished to maintain the English Church in most of its old ways. And so did the majority of the council; and so did the King. Alesius acted as spokesman of a minority who in their reaction against papal authority proclaimed that of the Bible. He also served, in part, as spokesman of Cromwell, and even of Henry VIII, who, whatever their attitude to the Bible, were certainly bent on the overthrow of its opponents, and were doubtless willing to use the advocates of Biblical authority to weaken Rome and so buttress their own claims to power. The two parties represented by Alesius and Stokesley were, in their best moments and maybe unwittingly, advocates of the sovereignty of the will of God, rather than of the limited and imperfect biblical, papal, traditional and ecclesiastical expressions of the same. Although they strove better than they knew, it was for the authority of these temporal and more or less concrete expressions that they now apparently contended. It was obvious, however, that at this London assembly the arguments of Alesius,

¹ *Ibid.*, 33ff. Not printed in Foxe.

² *Op. cit.*, 95.

while they may have helped to reinforce the reforming tendencies of a few prelates like Cranmer and Latimer, were incapable of winning over the majority of the members to even a moderate Melanchthonian Protestantism.

During the rest of his stay in England Alesius may have served the cause of the Reformation behind the scenes, but his next recorded appearance is shortly before his departure, which took place immediately after the passing of the Act of Six Articles (16th June, 1539) and a little before its publication. Of the events leading up to his flight from England he wrote in his letter to Queen Elizabeth.¹ He told how for three years Cromwell had retained him with empty hopes. The above Act, designed to show to threatening Continental Romanists that Henry was loyal to Catholic orthodoxy—with the Pope omitted—forbade among other things clerical marriage as a punishable offence. Alesius had married an Englishwoman, Catherine de Mayn² and was therefore in danger. Knowing this, Cranmer, before the Act was published, sent Lord Paget to Alesius to ask him to come to Lambeth. There the Archbishop spoke these memorable words to his Scottish friend: “Happy man that you are, you can escape. I wish that I might do the same; truly my see would be no hindrance to me. You must make haste to escape before the island is blocked up, unless you are willing to sign the decree, as I have, compelled by fear. I repent of what I have done. And if I had known that my only punishment would have been deposition from the archbishopric (as I heard that my Lord Latimer is deposed), of a truth I would not have subscribed. I am grieved, however, that you have been deprived of your salary for three years by Crumwell, that you have no funds for your travelling expenses and that I have no ready money. Nor dare I mention this to my friends, lest the King should become aware that warning had been given by me for you to escape, and that I have provided you with the means of travelling. I give you, however, this ring as a token of my friendship. It once belonged to Thomas Wolsey, and it was presented to me by the King when he gave me the archbishopric.”³

Acting on Cranmer’s advice, Alesius caused his property to be sold, lay hid in the house of a German sailor until his ship was ready to sail, and ultimately embarked disguised as a German soldier. He wrote a note to Cromwell warning him of his danger, but he was inclined to the

¹ S.P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1303.

² Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 268.

³ S.P. For. Eliz., I, 1303; v. Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 299.

view that Cromwell had treated him shabbily until Christopher Mont told him that Cromwell did not dare take an obvious interest in his departure lest he should be accused to the King, and that he would surely send the money due to Alesius to Germany.¹ Shortly after his arrival in Wittenberg he wrote to Cromwell, saying that he had returned on 9th July and received an affectionate welcome.² He thanked Cromwell for his favours, saying that he was almost his only haven of refuge in England. "For the sake of your virtue, piety and kindness," he told Cromwell, "I love England although absent from it."

After a short spell in Wittenberg Alesius spent the rest of his days as a theological professor in Germany, first in Frankfurt-on-Oder (1540-1542), and then till his death (17th March, 1565) in Leipzig. Although he did not return to Scotland or England he continued to reveal his interest in the progress of the Reformation in both countries. He was strongly inclined to go back to his native land in 1543, when he heard of the appointment of Arran to the regency and the authorisation of the free circulation of the vernacular Scriptures among the laity, a cause which he himself had done so much to promote. When Melanchthon heard the news in 1543 at Bonn from a Scottish nobleman, he said that as soon as Alesius heard it he would be off to Scotland on the wings of Daedalus.³ But the triumph of the Scottish reformers was short-lived and on 23rd April, 1544, Alesius wrote to Melanchthon about the return of Beaton to power and its cruel consequences.⁴ Accordingly he remained in Leipzig. He sent to his fellow Scots his *Cohortatio ad concordiam pietatis ac doctrine Christianae defensionem* (1544).⁵ In this he laments the national disunity caused by the French and English factions, denounces the cruelty of the bishops, speaks in glowing terms of Patrick Hamilton, and encourages the reformers to maintain their endeavour to abolish the abuses in the Scottish Church. This was his last known service to the cause of the Reformation in his native land.

¹ S.P. For. Eliz., I, 1303.

² L. & P., XIV, pt. i, No. 1353. McEwen (1,463) is manifestly wrong in saying that he fled in 1540, after Cromwell's death, with two other Scottish exiles.

³ Melanchthon to Camerarius, c. May, 1543. . . . *Mitto epistolam de Scoto regno, quam dabis legendam Alesio. Bonnae mecum Scotus fuit, homo nobilis, legatus in Galliam; is satis pie de nostris sententiis loquebatur. Mirum ni Alesius iam sibi Daedaleas pennas faciet, ut in patriam mox revolet.* Corp. Ref., V, 110.

⁴ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 273.

⁵ Printed at Leipzig. Colligan, *W. Whittingham*, 146, is wrong in deducing from the fact that Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 306, does not mention this work among the writings of Alesius known to be in Scottish libraries, that there is no copy in Scotland. There is one in the Signet Library, Edin.

In Germany he took an active part in the various religious conferences, e.g., at Worms (December, 1540), Ratisbon (March, 1541), Leipzig (1548), Naumberg (1554), Nuremberg (1555), and Dresden (1561). At some of these he collaborated with Melanchthon and Bucer; at some he met religious leaders from other lands, e.g., Calvin at Worms and Gardiner at Ratisbon. He is one of the first Scots recorded to have met Calvin. At Worms one of his opponents was the blind Scottish theologian, Robert Wauchope, who had recently carried on an anti-Lutheran campaign in Paris.¹ At Ratisbon he and Bucer had a long discussion with Gardiner of Winchester. The latter afterwards recorded that he had never debated with such a fool.² At these meetings Alesius upheld the moderate conciliatory position of his friend Melanchthon. He vainly hoped and strove for an accommodation of the Lutheran Church with the Roman, and was even nominated as a representative of the former at the Council of Trent. But throughout his negotiations for the unification of Continental Christendom he did not forget the Church in England. In 1542 he published his *De Authoritate Verbi Dei*, which gave an account of the debate in which he took part in the London assembly of divines in 1537, and expounded the Scriptural basis or norm of the true Church. When, with the reign of Edward VI, the Church of England entered upon a new phase of its career, he, realising with Cranmer its possible contribution as a bridge-church to the united church of his dreams, translated—maybe at Cranmer's request and certainly with his good will—“The Order of Communion” and the first Edwardian Prayer Book into Latin for the benefit of the religious leaders on the Continent. The first translation was published in 1548 (n.p.) under the title, *Ordo Distributionis Sacramenti Altaris in Regno Angliae*.³ The second translation was printed at Leipzig by Wolfgang Gunther in 1551. It is entitled, *Ordinatio Ecclesiae, seu Ministerii Ecclesiastici, in Florentissimo Regno Angliae, conscripta sermone patrio in Latinam linguam bona fide conversa, & ad consolationem*

¹ *Corp. Ref.*, III, 1138, 1140. There are many references to Alesius in *Corp. Ref.*, e.g., III, 743 (17th July, 1539). Cruciger to Myconius. *Alesius, elapsus, iam Witebergae est*, 1030, 1104, 1105, 1136, 1140, 1161, 1209, 1240 (Melanchthon re A. at Worms, “saepe altercante”), 1247 (Melanchthon again re A. at Worms, *Erat paratus Alesius et cupidus certaminis*), etc.

² Gardiner, *Exstasis testimoniorum* (1554); Constant, 373m; Muller, J. A., *S. Gardiner and the Tudor Reaction*, 97ff.

³ Reprint of English version, published 8th March, 1547-8, in *The Two Liturgies with other Documents . . . of King Edward VI*, Parker Soc., 1844. Coverdale also translated *The Order* into Latin and sent his Latin version to Calvin, from Frankfurt, 26th March, 1548. Cov., *Remains*, Parker Soc., 525.

*ecclesiarum Christi, ubicunque locorum ac gentium, his tristissimis temporibus, edita, ab Alexandro Alesio Scoto sacrae theologiae doctore.*¹

The Latin version of the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer, made by Walter Haddon, 1560, and enjoined to be used in the universities, the great public schools and by the clergy in their private devotions, is slavishly based upon the *Ordinatio* of Alesius, so far as the first Edwardian Prayer Book was incorporated in the Elizabethan. It is remarkable that the disciple of Patrick Hamilton should thus be privileged to exercise an influence upon the devotional life and literature of England more than thirty years after he had witnessed the noble martyr's grim end, and that the work of an old St. Andrews student should thus be given a part in the direction of the piety of Elizabethan Oxford and Cambridge.²

¹ Ath. Cant. mentions reprints 1619, 1690. There are copies in Edin. Univ., T.C.D., B.M. Alesius explicitly says that he issued this work for the benefit of the Continental Churches, to show how the Reformation was advancing in England, and to serve *vel ad exemplum, vel consolationem, vel etiam dolorem aliquorum.* A's letter to King Edward VI (*Lipsiae duodecimo calendas Quintilij anno 1551*) regarding his translation is in Bodleian Lib. MS. Smith, 67, fol. 59-61, n. 21. v. C. Hopf, *M. Bucer and the English Reformation* (1946), p. 87.

² The Latin Prayer Book of 1560 is printed in *Liturgical Services of Queen Elizabeth* (Parker Soc.). The editor criticises the translation adversely (xxiv ff.). He also says (xxv n3) that Strype (*Cranmer*, I, 579) commits the extraordinary blunder of representing Alesius's *Ordinatio* as a Latin version of a German work by Bucer. Probably this blunder is the basis of the ascription to A. by Ath. Cant. (I, 240) of a translation into Latin of *Ordinationes-Anglorum ecclesiae per Bucerum*, which Baxter (*op. cit.*, 98), perpetuating the blunder, says Alesius translated from the German. The confusion seems to be due originally to the fact that Conrad printed Alesius's *Ordinatio* in his edition of Bucer's *Scripta Anglicana* (1577) (pp. 370-455); immediately after the *Ordinatio* Conrad places Bucer's *Censura*, the marginal rubrics of which refer to the foregoing translation of Alesius. v. C. Hopf, *M. Bucer and the English Reformation* (1946), p. 87. G. Rupp, in a review of Hopf's book (J. T. S., Vol. xlviii, Jan.-Apr., 1947, p. 117), says, "The Latin version of the Prayer Book by Alesius (1551) was presumably included in Bucer's *Scripta Anglicana* (1557) to make the *Censura* intelligible to continental readers, and Dr. Hopf is content to follow all modern historians and refer to Alesius's "deliberate inaccuracies." It is time this was reconsidered, for though Alesius was a very monument of indiscretion (*sic.*), would even he have gone as far as he appears to do? That in his preface he should stress the honesty of his translation, *bona fide versata accurate et fideliter*, and then go on to manifold mutilations, additions and omissions (including all reference to the chrisom in Baptism, rubrics and collects for anointing in Unction) is ingeniously explained by Dixon as an attempt on Alesius's part to make the Anglicans appear all things to all men, to Imperialists, Lutherans and Zwinglians. But would any man translating a Prayer Book add sentences to the collect for the Purification and compose an entirely new collect for St. Luke's Day? Would he send a copy of all this to Edward VI asking him to read and approve the translation? Is it not likely that Alesius had got hold of an earlier (or later?) draft of the Prayer Book (there are difficulties in the attractive suggestion that his was the admittedly defective *versio D. Cheekii* which Peter Martyr borrowed from Sir John Cheke)?

According to Strype (*Parker*, sub., 1568) most of the Cambridge colleges refused to use the Elizabethan Latin P. Bk. because of its papal dregs.

It is also of interest that in Bancroft's sermon of February, 1588-9, in which he denounced Scottish Presbyterianism, he quoted the words of Alesius uttered against the critics of the first Edwardian Prayer Book, viz., *Divisionis occasionem arripiebant, vocabula et pene sillabas expendendo*. "Whereupon," says Bancroft, "Archbishop Cranmer, procuring the same booke to be translated into Latin and requiring M. Bucer's judgement of it, received this his approbation . . ."¹

Among the outstanding friends of Alesius during his four years in England were Latimer and Cranmer. He never forgot his debt to them. In his *Primus Liber Psalmorum Davidis*² he tells that he had often heard the former preaching the Gospel before Henry VIII in the palaces at Westminster, Greenwich and Hampton Court, and of the great impression the sermons made on all classes, and how Latimer would take the exiled Scot's arm in the streets of London and make pleasant and profitable converse with him.³ Of his intimacy with Cranmer we have already had several examples. In his *Omnes Disputationes . . . de tota Epistola ad Romanos*⁴ he pays a glowing tribute to the Archbishop. "Te enim tanquam parente istic usus sum," he writes, "ad te in omnibus difficultatibus pro consilio et auxilio tanquam ad sacram anchoram configui," and proceeds to praise his late patron's wisdom, moderation, indefatigable quest for truth and liberality to learned men of all nations.⁵

We have seen how in his printed works Alesius showed his interest in English affairs long after he returned to Germany. We have now to refer to his long letter of fully twenty pages written from Leipzig on 1st September, 1559, to Queen Elizabeth.⁶ In it he speaks of the joy of the religious exiles from England, Scotland, France and Belgium at her accession. Those who have returned to England from Frankfurt-on-Main and Strassburg have expressed their gratification. He who was afforded an asylum in England when he was called to teach in Cambridge would join with them in their jubilation. He writes at length about her mother, Anne Boleyn. He thinks that one of the chief reasons for her death was her responsibility for the embassy which she had persuaded Henry to

¹ Wodrow, *Misc.*, I, 480.

² Lipsiae, 1550, 1554.

³ v. A. F. Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*, 14 ni.

⁴ *Cum praefatione Philippi Melanchthonis et peroratione ad Thomam Cranmerum.* (Lipsiae, 1553.)

⁵ v. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 23n; Mitchell, *Scot. Ref.*, 268, says that Alesius spoke of the martyrdom of Latimer and Cranmer in his commentary on the first book of Psalms. The reference, which we have not seen, could not have been in the above edd. (1550 and 1554) of *Primus Liber*.

⁶ S.P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1303, pp. 524-534.

send to the Lutherans. She was executed before it had returned to England.¹ On account of it the Emperor Charles V had threatened war against the Lutherans, and all the bishops who were opposed to the pure Gospel entered into a conspiracy against her. He thinks that he was to some extent the occasion of the embassy, because he was the bearer of Melanchthon's *Loci*, which he had induced the author to dedicate to Henry VIII, and he had also been asked by the latter whether he thought Melanchthon would come to England, if invited by the King, and had replied that he had little doubt of the German theologian's inclination to do so, if he obtained permission from Duke John Frederick. He has often thought of writing the story of the death of Queen Anne, to illustrate the glory of God and to afford consolation to the godly. He then tells how, soon after Foxe and Heath had been sent to Germany at the end of 1535, Gardiner and others plotted against Anne and how Cromwell himself entered into the conspiracy. On 30th April, 1536, the enemies of the Queen reported their findings to the King at Greenwich Palace. Alesius happened to be at Court at the time ; he was soliciting Cromwell for the payment of the stipend which Henry had awarded to the Scot. He tells of his friendship with the evangelical bishops, for whose appointment Anne had been responsible, and of his special intimacy with Cranmer and Latimer, to whom she was in the habit of confessing before she went to the Lord's Table. Because he had heard from Cranmer, Latimer and Cromwell of her fine character and desire to promote the Gospel, he was much grieved when he heard of the designs of her enemies, especially the Emperor, the Pope and others hostile to the Gospel, who hoped along with her to bury true religion in England. He tells of his gruesome dream on the morning of her death and his sad meeting with Cranmer.² He did not attend her execution, but his landlord, a servant of Cromwell, did, and with others brought home the news of her bravery, which impressed even those who hated the purer religion which she had introduced into England. From their table-talk and common contemporary rumour Alesius gathered that the charges made against her were believed to have been trumped up, and that among the real reasons for Henry's antipathy to her was the desire of an heir, for he feared that if he had none civil war would follow his death and the crown would be transferred to the White Rose, and also the failure of the embassy which he had sent at her instigation to Germany, for he was annoyed at the Lutheran princes, who refused to enter into an anti-imperial alliance with him

¹ Dixon, I, 388n, thinks that, instead of the failure of the mission to Germany being a chief reason for her death, the view that the failure of the mission was due to her death is more probable.

² v. *supra*, 15.

unless for the defence of pure doctrine, demanded more money than he was willing to give, refused to allow Melanchthon to come to England and obviously doubted his *bona fides*. Moreover, it was held that Henry was afraid of a coalition that in the interests of Rome and orthodoxy was ready to make war on him, and that the real reason for Anne's death would soon show itself, for if it was her alleged adultery there would be no change in his religious policy, whereas, if it was fear of war with papalists, then Lutheranism would soon be driven out of England. If there were another woman in the case, that too would soon be revealed for Henry was an impatient lover. Another servant, just come from Court, added to the piquancy of the table-talk by announcing that the King was already enjoying himself with Jane Seymour. Alesius proceeds to show how in the course of Providence the crown has rightly come to Elizabeth.

He then tells how he came to leave England. True religion in Henry's reign had its commencement and its end with Anne Boleyn. As soon as the King began to hate her, laws hostile to the pure Gospel appeared. These he could not conscientiously bear nor could his profession allow him to dissemble, for he was then, by royal orders, filling the office of reader at Cambridge. Accordingly he came to Court and through Cromwell asked for his dismissal. The latter however retained him for about three years with empty hopes. He then relates how under the pressure of the Act of Six Articles he was obliged to leave the country, giving particulars, already cited,¹ of the events leading up to his departure. In his postscript to this interesting letter he states that the bearer, no other than the celebrated John Utentovius, whom he commends to Queen Elizabeth, was the constant associate of John A. Lasco in the ministry of the Gospel and was now proceeding from Poland to England on a special mission.² But the Scot's last word to the Queen is a request that should she wish to send him anything this might be done through Bishop William Barlow or Dr. Bale. The latter, an admirer and friend of long standing, paid a glowing tribute to Alesius in his *Scriptorum Illustrium* (1559),³ and furnished a long list of his writings (among them the translation of Bale's

¹ v. *supra*, 24.

² v. Letter from A. Lasco to Elizabeth, 1st Sept., 1559, brought by Utentovius. S.P. For. Eliz., I, No. 1304.

³ Cent., XIV, p. 227. "Genere ac natione Scotus, vir omnibus bonarum artium scientijs praeditus, ac theologus insignis, ob impiam constitutionem, quam Antichristi filii. Scotorum episcopi, adversus Dei veritatem evulgaverunt, terram illam prouersus dereliquit . . . Post quandam in ea re, procurante Cromvelo, disceptationem, adversus Joannem Stokisley . . . claruit Alesius in Saxonia, Lipsensis academie professor & in theologia decanus, 1551.

own *Vocatio* into Latin). In our opinion, a biography of the Scottish exile, who played, according to the historian of the English Church Dixon,¹ "a not altogether insignificant part in the English Reformation," as well as in the history of the Church in Germany and in his native land, is long overdue.

¹ I, 387.

